

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane comprising at least one layer consisting of a needled fiber web which is compressed to a porosity of between 60% and 95%, and that is constructed of heat-resistant stainless steel fibers, wherein the fiber web is needled in one step and compressed in a different step.

2. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 1, in which the porosity of the needled fiber web is between 80% and 95%.

3. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 1, in which the fiber web consists of steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between 5  $\mu\text{m}$  and 150  $\mu\text{m}$ .

4. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 3, in which the fiber web consists of steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between 10  $\mu\text{m}$  and 50  $\mu\text{m}$ .

5. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 1, in which the weight of the fiber web is between 400  $\text{g/m}^2$  and 4000  $\text{g/m}^2$ .

6. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 5, in which the weight of the fiber web is between 1000  $\text{g/m}^2$  and 2500  $\text{g/m}^2$ .

7. (Original) Burner membrane according to Claim 1, which is provided with a regular pattern of perforations over at least a portion of its surface.

8. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 1, wherein said steel fibers are obtained by shaving the rolled edge of a roll of metal foil.

9. (Withdrawn) Method of manufacturing a burner membrane according to Claim 1, comprising the following steps:

(a) providing a fiber web composed of metal fibers;

- (b) needling the fiber web;
- (c) compressing the needled fiber web to said porosity.

10. (Withdrawn) Method for avoiding a sintering operation in the manufacture of a burner membrane, said method comprising the following steps:

- (a) providing a fiber web composed of metal fibers;
- (b) needling the fiber web;
- (c) compressing the needled fiber web to a desired porosity to form a burner membrane, wherein the compressing step is not performed in the needling step;
- (d) wherein the membrane is not sintered.

11. (Withdrawn ) Method according to Claim 10, wherein the compressing of the needled fiber web is done to such a degree that cold weldings between individual fibers are avoided.

12. (Previously Presented) A burner component for a gas burner, comprising a surface burner comprising the burner membrane of Claim 1.

13. (Currently Amended) Burner membrane comprising at least one layer comprising a needled fiber web which is compressed to a porosity of between 60% and 95%, and which comprises heat-resistant stainless steel fibers, wherein the fiber web is needled in one step and compressed in a different step, **wherein the burner membrane is not sintered.**

14. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, in which the porosity of the compressed needled fiber web is between 80% and 95%.

15. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, in which the fiber web comprises steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between 5  $\mu\text{m}$  and 150  $\mu\text{m}$ .

16. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 15, in which the fiber web comprises steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between 10  $\mu\text{m}$  and 50  $\mu\text{m}$ .

17. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, in which the weight of the fiber web is between  $400 \text{ g/m}^2$  and  $4000 \text{ g/m}^2$ .

18. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 17, in which the weight of the fiber web is between  $1000 \text{ g/m}^2$  and  $2500 \text{ g/m}^2$ .

19. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, which is provided with a regular pattern of perforations over at least a portion of its surface.

20. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, wherein said steel fibers are obtained by shaving the rolled edge of a roll of metal foil.

21. (Withdrawn) Method of manufacturing a burner membrane according to Claim 13, comprising the following steps:

- (a) providing a fiber web comprising metal fibers;
- (b) needling the fiber web;
- (c) compressing the needled fiber web to said porosity.

22. (Withdrawn) Method for avoiding a sintering operation in the manufacture of a burner membrane, said method comprising the following steps:

- (a) providing a fiber web comprising metal fibers;
- (b) needling the fiber web;
- (c) compressing the needled fiber web to a desired porosity to form a burner membrane, wherein the compressing step is not performed in the needling step;
- (d) wherein the membrane is not sintered.

23. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, wherein the compressing of the needled fiber web is done to such a degree that cold weldings between individual fibers are avoided.

24. (Withdrawn) Method for avoiding a sintering operation in the manufacture of a burner membrane, said method consisting of the following:

(a) providing a fiber web comprising metal fibers, wherein the fiber web consists of steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between 10  $\mu\text{m}$  and 50  $\mu\text{m}$ ;

(b) needling the fiber web;

(c) compressing the needled fiber web to a desired porosity of between 80% and 95% to form a burner membrane, wherein the compressing step is not performed in the needling step; and

(d) perforating the burner membrane in a regular pattern over at least a portion of its surface with a laser;

wherein the membrane is not sintered, and wherein the weight of the fiber web is between 1000  $\text{g/m}^2$  and 2500  $\text{g/m}^2$ .

25. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, wherein providing a fiber web comprises providing one of a tubular, cylindrical, and conical fiber web.

26. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, further comprising perforating the fiber web in a regular pattern over at least a portion of its surface.

27. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein the metal fibers are obtained by shaving the rolled edge of a roll of metal foil.

28. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, further comprising coating the burner membrane with a substance that activates the oxidation of a burner fuel mixture.

29. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, wherein the desired porosity is between approximately 80% and 95%.

30. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, wherein the fiber web comprises heat-resistant stainless steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between approximately 10  $\mu\text{m}$  and 50  $\mu\text{m}$ .

31. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 22, wherein the fiber web comprises heat-resistant stainless steel fibers, and wherein a weight of the burner membrane is between approximately  $1000 \text{ g/m}^2$  and  $2500 \text{ g/m}^2$ .

32. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 10, wherein the metal fibers are obtained by shaving the rolled edge of a roll of metal foil.

33. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 13, wherein the needled fiber web is formed from one of a tubular, cylindrical, and conical fiber web.

34. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, further comprising coating the burner membrane with a substance that activates the oxidation of a burner fuel mixture.

35. (Previously Presented) The burner membrane of Claim 13, wherein the burner membrane is coated with a substance that activates the oxidation of a burner fuel mixture.

36. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 10, further comprising coating the burner membrane with a substance that activates the oxidation of a burner fuel mixture.

37. (Previously Presented) The burner membrane of Claim 1, wherein the burner membrane is coated with a substance that activates the oxidation of a burner fuel mixture.

38. (Withdrawn) Burner membrane according to Claim 22, wherein the metal fibers are obtained by shaving the rolled edge of a roll of metal foil.

39. (Previously Presented) Burner membrane according to Claim 1, wherein substantially all of the volume of the burner membrane is in a compressed state.

40. (Previously Presented) A burner component for a gas burner, comprising a surface burner comprising the burner membrane of Claim 13.

41. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein the fiber web comprises heat-resistant stainless steel fibers, and wherein a weight of the burner membrane is between approximately  $1000 \text{ g/m}^2$  and  $2500 \text{ g/m}^2$ .

42. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein the fiber web comprises heat-resistant stainless steel fibers having an equivalent diameter of between approximately 10  $\mu\text{m}$  and 50  $\mu\text{m}$ .

43. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein the compressing of the needled fiber web is done to such a degree that cold weldings between individual fibers are avoided.

44. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein the porosity is between approximately 80% and 95%.

45. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, wherein providing a fiber web comprises providing one of a tubular, cylindrical, and conical fiber web.

46. (Withdrawn) Method according to Claim 21, further comprising perforating the fiber web in a regular pattern over at least a portion of its surface.

47. (Cancelled)